

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**REGULAR MEETING****Monday, February 8, 1999**

Present: June Bailey, Lucy Burtnett, Bob Martz, M.S. Mitchell, Leon Robinson

Absent: Pat Consolver and William Sanders

Also Present: Richard Lopez and Jaime Lopez, Hispanic Coalition; Paul Sanchez, SER; and Vince Kendrick, Janice McKinney, and Tim Vanatta (Staff)

AGENDA

President Burtnett called the meeting to order at approximately 1:35 p.m. The minutes of the January 20, 1999, special joint meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners and the Wichita Park Alliance were reviewed and approved.

OFF THE AGENDA ITEM

1. Mitchell introduced an off-agenda item. He acknowledged that members of the Hispanic Coalition Soccer Club were present to discuss a letter they received from Park staff stating that soccer tournaments would be moved from Schell Park to fields at Evergreen Park in 1999.

Richard Lopez, Hispanic Coalition, addressed the Park Board. He stated that the group had received a letter on 12/17/98 stating that the Recreation Division would no longer allow soccer tournament play on the soccer fields at Schell Park in 1999. He said he had a petition with signatures of over 300 soccer players who want their tournaments continued at Schell Park. He stated that they were willing to work with Park staff to solve any problems with the neighborhood as a result of the soccer tournaments.

Jaime Lopez then addressed the group adding that their organization has been working with Park staff and that they have agreed to bring in porta-johns during tournaments and to help with crowd control. He said they feel they were originally told the tournaments could continue in 1999 and then later told they would have to be moved elsewhere. The said they were requesting that the tournaments be allowed to continue at Schell Park in 1999, and that an alternate site be located for 2000.

Paul Sanchez with SER addressed the group. He indicated that historically their organization has played their soccer tournaments at Schell Park and they wanted to continue that tradition. However, because of overcrowding, he would agree to move the adult men's tournament to another location in 1999. He said he felt Park staff's suggestion to use fields at Woodland Park was not a good solution and that he would prefer that fields be added at Evergreen Park to handle the overflow.

Vince Kendrick, Park Department Recreation Director, stated that he has been working with both the Hispanic Soccer League and the neighborhood association near Schell Park. He said

the neighbors have communicated concerns about activities that are occurring during soccer tournaments at Schell Park. He said they have reported incidents to the police on numerous occasions and that many of the residents feel intimidated by the soccer tournament spectators. Kendrick added that overcrowding at the park was a problem for large soccer tournaments; that there was not enough parking or restroom facilities; and that the tournaments have outgrown the park and it is becoming a dangerous situation. He said the Health Department, the Police Department and the Fire Department have all been called out to the park to help control unauthorized food vendors and belligerent spectators. He said the Park Department's decision to move the tournaments to another location was not arbitrary, but rather one to alleviate the overcrowded situation.

Mitchell reported that the soccer league had sent a letter to the Mayor requesting that City-owned land at 37th Street North be considered for development as soccer fields for their tournaments. He said to date no answer to the request has been received.

Director Vanatta clarified that allowing an activity that was too large for the space to continue would not be responsible to the neighborhood. He said that the City has a limited number of fields and that staff must be sensitive to the neighborhoods where those fields are located. He stated that staff would continue to seek a solution that would accommodate both interests. He also said that a neighborhood meeting was scheduled for that evening (2/8) and that individuals on both sides of the issue would have an opportunity to speak.

Burnett thanked the soccer league attendees for coming to the meeting to state their concerns, but indicated that the Park Board was probably not the proper venue for the soccer league's concerns since the Park Board was strictly an advisory body.

President Burnett then adjourned the meeting to a workshop session.

FACILITY CONSULTANT WORKSHOP

Ron Vine and Gary Harden, consultants with Bucher, Willis & Ratliff, were introduced to the Park Board. Vine presented a summary of the results of the 1998 citizen survey of park perceptions and needs. Harden presented the group with a recap of the process they used to rate individual facilities as part of the study. Vine showed charts that compared Wichita with other cities with regard to specific facilities in parks. Harden added that Wichita ranked fairly average in size and condition of park facilities. He showed the group how Wichita facilities compared to National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards for number of facilities per 30,000 residents.

The board indicated that the final report should reflect that dollar estimates are a result of fine-tuned priorities identified by the Park Board, which helped to reduce a preliminary cost estimate of over \$50 million to a more manageable estimate of \$9 million.

Board members also asked that a final report be provided to them at their next meeting in March.

Lucy Burtnett, President

ATTEST:

Maryann Crockett, Clerk